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the public good ; but his scheme for "civilian billeting" (by which wealthy people having rooms to spare in their houses would have been compelled to billet artisans employed in public works) leads one to infer that his statesmanship was not equal to his science. Nevertheless, there can be no question about his large-hearted charity. He instituted the "Crédit Foncier," which flourishes in great prosperity to this day ; he also founded the "Caisse de Rétraite pour la Vieillesse," and several other agricultural charities, which, though less successful, afford great assistance to aged workmen. Louis Napoleon used to say in jest that the whole of the War Minister's budget would not have been enough to realize M. Dumas's benevolent schemes ; and once, half dazzled, half amused, by one of the chemist's vast sanitary projects, he called him "the poet of hygiene."

It was to be expected that a man working with such eminent success in so many spheres of activity, and at one of the chief centres of the world's culture, should be loaded with medals, and marks of distinction of every kind. It would be idle to enumerate the orders of knighthood, or the learned societies, to which he belonged, for, so far from their honoring him, he honored them in accepting their membership. It is a pleasure, however, to remember that he lived to realize his highest ambitions and to enjoy the fruits of his well-earned renown. France has added his name in the Pantheon

"AUX GRANDS HOMMES LA PATRIE RECONNAISSANTE."

OSWALD HEER.

OSWALD HEER, the most eminent investigator of the fossil plants and insects of the tertiary period, died on the 27th of September last, shortly after he had entered upon the seventy-fifth year of his age.

He was born at the hamlet of Nieder-Utzwyl, in Canton St. Gallen, Switzerland, August 31, 1809, passed most of his youth at Matt, in Canton Glarus, where his father was the parish clergyman, pursued his academic and professional studies at the University of Halle, and was ordained as minister of the Gospel in the year 1831. The next year he went to Zurich, where he resided for the rest of his life. Here he studied medicine for a time, but soon devoted himself seriously to entomology and botany, of which he was fond from boyhood. In 1834 he became Privat-docent of these sciences ; in 1852, when the University of Zurich was developed, he became its Professor of Botany, and in 1855 he took a similar chair in the Polytechnicum. Most of his

earlier publications were entomological; and it was by the way of entomology that he entered upon his distinguished career as a paleontologist. His life-long friend, the eminent Escher von der Linth, appreciating his rare powers of observation, induced him to undertake the study of the fossil insects of the celebrated tertiary deposits of Oeningen. The results of his labors in this virgin field were published between the years 1847 and 1853. His attention had from the first been attracted to the plants associated with the insect remains. His first paleobotanical paper appeared in 1851; the three volumes of his *Flora Tertiaria Helvetiæ* were issued between 1855 and 1859; in 1862 his memoir on the fossil flora of Bovey-Tracey (England) was published in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, London. About the same time also appeared a paper in the Journal of the Geological Society on certain fossil plants of the Isle of Wight. For the benefit of his health, always delicate and then much impaired, he passed the winter of 1854-55 in Madeira, and on his return published a paper on the fossil plants of that island, and an article on the probable origin of the actual flora and fauna of the Azores, Madeira, and the Canaries. In this, and in his work, published in 1860, on Tertiary Climates in their Relation to Vegetation (which the next year appeared also in a French translation by his young friend Gaudin), Heer brought out his theory of a Miocene Atlantis. His more extensive and popular treatise upon past climates as illustrated by vegetable paleontology, his *Urwelt der Schweiz*, — a vivid portraiture of the past of his native country, — appeared in 1865, and afterwards in a revised French edition, with his friend Gaudin (who died soon after) for collaborator as well as translator. There was also an English translation by Heywood, published in 1876, and, indeed, it is said to have been translated into six languages.

In 1877 Heer completed his *Flora Fossilis Helvetiæ*, a square-folio volume, with seventy plates, which extended and supplemented his Tertiary Flora of that country, being devoted to the illustration of the fossil plants of the Carboniferous, the Triassic, the Jurassic, and the Cretaceous, as well as the Eocene formations.

The life-long delicacy of Heer's health prevented his making any extensive explorations in person. But materials for his investigation came to him in even embarrassing abundance, not only from his own country, — where, even before he was widely known, (as his fellow countryman and his distinguished fellow worker in paleobotany, Lesquereux, informs us,) a lady opened upon her property near Lausanne quarries and tunnels expressly for the discovery and collection of fossil

plants, and sent them by tons to Zurich,—but from all parts of the world, collections were pressed upon him, and his whole time and strength were given to their study. In this way he became interested in the Arctic fossil flora, of which he became the principal investigator and expounder. His first essay in the domain which he has made so peculiarly his own was in a paper on certain fossil plants of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, published in 1865; and in 1868 he brought out the first of that most important series of memoirs upon the ancient floras of Arctic America, Greenland, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Arctic and Subarctic Asia, etc., which, collected, make up the seven quarto volumes of the *Flora Fossilis Arctica*. The seventh volume of this monumental work was brought to a conclusion only a few months before the author's death.

Heer's researches into the fossil botany of the tertiary deposits were very important in their bearings. They made it certain that our actual temperate floras round the world had a common birth-place at the North, where the continents are in proximity; they essentially identified the direct or collateral ancestors of our existing forest trees which flourished within the Arctic zone when it enjoyed a climate resembling our own at present; and they leave the similarities and the dissimilarities of the temperate floras of the Old and the New World to be explained as simple consequences of established facts. Thus Heer himself did away with his own hypothesis of a continental Atlantis by bringing to light the facts which proved that there was no need of it. And, while thus justifying the ideas which had been brought forward in one of the Memoirs of the American Academy (in 1859) before these fossil data were known, he was not slow to adopt and to extend the tentative views which he had confirmed.*

A list of Heer's scientific publications is given in the *Botanisches Centralblatt*, No. 5, for 1884. They are seventy-seven in number, besides the seven quarto volumes of the *Flora Fossilis Arctica*, which comprise a considerable number of independent memoirs. These works make an era in vegetable paleontology. Their crowning general interest is that they bring the vegetation of the past into direct connection with the present.

Although he lived to a good old age, and was never inactive, Heer was for most of his life an invalid, suffering from pulmonary disease. For the last twelve years his work was carried on at his bedside or

* The first and second volumes of the *Flora Fossilis Arctica* appeared in 1868–71. "Sequoia and its History," in which the earlier view was extended and made clearer, and Heer's results noted, was published in 1872.

from his bed, assisted by a devoted and accomplished daughter ; he seldom left his house, except to pass the last two winters in the milder climate of Italy. Last summer, having finished his Arctic Fossil Flora, in the hope of recruiting his exhausted strength he was removed to the most sheltered spot on the shores of the Lake of Geneva, but without benefit. He died at Lausanne, at his brother's house, on the 27th of September, 1883. It has been well said of him, in a tribute which a personal friend and fellow naturalist paid to his memory, that " a man more lovable, more sympathetic, and a life more laborious and pure, one could scarcely imagine."

Heer was elected into the Academy in May, 1877. He is botanically commemorated in a genus of beautiful Melastomaceous plants, indigenous to Mexico.

FRANÇOIS-AUGUSTE-ALEXIS MIGNET.

FRANÇOIS-AUGUSTE-ALEXIS MIGNET, whose name was added to our Foreign Honorary roll in 1876, died in Paris on the 24th of March last, at eighty-eight years of age. He had lived to be the senior member of the Institute of France, having been admitted to the Académie Française in 1836, and to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences as early as 1832. Of this latter Academy he was, at his death, the Honorary Perpetual Secretary, after more than forty years of active service in that distinguished office. His discourses at the annual meetings of this Academy, as published from year to year, contain admirable sketches of the lives and characters of the eminent members with whom he was associated, and who had died before him. Talleyrand, De Tocqueville, Victor Cousin, and De Broglie, of France; Ancillon and Savigny, of Germany; Brougham and Macaulay, of England; and Edward Livingstone, of our own land, — were among the subjects of his brilliant *éloges*. But he was the author of larger and more substantial works of history and biography. In 1824 he published a notable History of the great French Revolution of 1789, and this was followed, from time to time, by many volumes relating to " The Spanish Succession," " The Abdication of Charles V.," " The Rivalry of Charles V.," and other topics of general historical interest. A charming biography of Marie Stuart, and an excellent little Life of Benjamin Franklin, were also among the productions of his pen. He was a man of great accomplishments and many personal attractions, an eloquent speaker and a fine writer, and he will long be remembered as one of the most valuable and honored members of the Institute of France.